

IPSWICH PERFINS/PERFORATORS By Dave Hill.

The Archives start with the case of Braham, a sub-postmaster in East London who perforated stamps in competition with Sloper. Braham went bankrupt and was replaced by W.L. Kenny who had perforated stamps in Ipswich. I referred to this in Bulletin 274 when talking about Fison's perfins.

I have obtained some old Bulletins and find that Mike Burrows wrote about Ipswich perfins in Bulletin 190, November 1980. Mike was a frequent and very readable contributor to the Bulletin. His information takes the story back further and shows another link between Braham and Ipswich. I apologise for telling the story backwards and suggest members read this and then read page 11 in Bulletin 274 to get it in the right order.

It would seem that W.L. Kenny's partner or boss was a W. Day as he is listed as proprietor of the sub-post office at 46 St. Nicholas Street. Braham produced stamp requisition forms (one is illustrated on Page 12 of John Nelson's Handbook) for the convenience of clients and some bore an impression of a perfin. They must have also been sent to prospective clients as amongst the 100 or so known are some perfins as yet not recorded on stamps. One such is the perfin "W.DAY", which Mike presumed was more of a sample than an actual perfin to be used on a stamp. Amongst the ones known used are at least two from firms within yards of the Ipswich Post Office of Day and Kenny.

Does anyone know the whereabouts of the Braham perfin requisitions I refer to in the above article - an example as in John Nelson's Book. John Nelson says they were offered some years ago by an auction house. Did a member buy them or does someone know who did? With copies of these it may be possible to establish a Braham "alphabet".

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Editor:- This seems to be a good time to repeat the article by Mike Burrows which Dave mentions in the above article.

ONE THING LEADS TO ANOTHER By Mike Burrows.

About ten years ago (now 25!!)/ whilst chatting to members of a local philatelic society after a meeting, the subject was turned around to perfins. During the course of the conversation someone said that they had heard from someone else, that many years ago

it was possible to buy perfined postage stamps from an Ipswich Post Office.

At the time this was regarded as just a piece of gossip without any foundation whatsoever. But in the belief that all bits of perfin information should be recorded, even if somewhat dubious, a note was made of the conversation and forgotten until now.

To have an interest in more than one branch of philately can sometimes be an advantage. A recent piece of research that involved the identity of sub-postmasters of Ipswich in the late Victorian era, brought to light a possible clue to help substantiate the rumour first heard all those years ago.

As both the port and town of the Capital of Suffolk grew it became necessary to open more sub-post offices or branch receiving offices. In the early 1850s there was only one sub-post office. This was situated near the docks and had its own circular date stamp - WET DOCK/IPSWICH. A very popular postmark with local collectors. In addition to this Ipswich also boasted two branch receiving offices.

By the 1880's several more offices were opened. One of which was at 46 St. Nicholas Street. This office was located in the premises of William Day, a grocer and provision dealer.

On page 12 of John Nelson's book "The Handbook of British Perfins" can be found an illustration of a Frank Braham Stamp Requisition Form. Attached to the form is a perfin DSF/G on the centre margin of either a ½d vermilion or a 1d lilac.

Also in existence is a small collection of a hundred or so of these so-called 'Braham Proofs', several of which have had a reference number added in ink. Some of these proofs are of perfins known to have been used on postage stamps by companies in the Suffolk area. Whilst some are not as yet recorded in the catalogue at all.

Reference was made in another article "Ipswich Firm's Philatelic Links" (published Sept/Oct 1980 SEPS Bulletin) to the perfin,

341.1 SHC 10,12,8 4½mm

Known with Ipswich postmarks of 1896-98, this perfin is number 2042 in the 'Braham Proof series.

No.2040 in the same series is:-

143 RD/F/JB 11,11/13/7,13 4½/7½/4½mm

and is identified with R.D. & J.D. Fraser of Ipswich and Felixstowe.

In the middle of those two perfin is 'Braham Proof No.2041. Not listed in the catalogue, the configuration of this perfin is:-

W-DAY 13,11,10,8 4½mm

The stop is not level between the W and D but is equidistant between the bottom two pins of each of the two letters.

The obvious conjecture to all this is that the sub-postmaster, William Day, acted as agent for Frank Braham and, therefore, the rumour was partially true. The possible correct explanation being that companies in Ipswich requiring perfinned postage stamps could order them from William Day. The 'Braham Proof No.2041 being in the nature of a sample of the kind of work Braham could produce, rather than a required security perfin for William Day's grocery and provisions business.

If the perfin SHC does prove to belong to S.H. Cowell (Ed.:- at the present time, 1995, no proving cover has been found but the die is known on Id lilacs and Jubilee stamps with dates ranging from 1893 to 1899) this would add weight to the theory. Especially as both S.H. Cowell and R.D.S J.B. Fraser were located within a few hundred yards of William Day's sub-post office and grocery business.

Admittedly it is all theory, but can we be sure that we have heard the last from sub-postmaster William Day?

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Continuing this theme, Dave Hill adds the following:-

Sidney Allchin, another perforator of postage stamps, produced a list of users for a publicity leaflet; we think about 1910. The list is a bit short and it is not possible to be sure which dies are Allchin's from just a list of users. I did come to the tentative conclusion however that they might use an alphabet which had lots of small pins (like Sloper's at the same date) but with rather untidy "squarish" corners where there should be nice curves.

I would be pleased to hear the comments of any other "alphabet seekers", or anything else that would help to determine the maker of individual perfins